

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Child Care and Development

Announces an Application For Funding

Under the Child Care and Development Fund

Deadline: December 15, 2004 by 5:00 p.m.

Investing in Virginia's Children

SUB-GRANT NUMBER G-DPA-05-04

An optional pre-application conference will be held on October 28.

More information about the conference is available on the website.

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Investing in Virginia's Children

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose and intent of this Request for Application (RFA) is to award sub-grants to collaborative partnerships of public and private sector agencies in Virginia to plan, develop, establish, expand or improve the quality of child care for young children up to age 5, with the ultimate goal of helping children enter school ready to learn. The sub-grants will bring together local stakeholders to design and develop a comprehensive infrastructure at the local level that supports seamless quality early care and education prior to school entry. The sub-grants are competitive grants awarded on a one-time basis by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS).

Through these sub-grants, VDSS hopes to create or strengthen local and regional partnerships providing coordinated, cost-efficient means for parents to access a comprehensive system of early care and education, thereby improving children's preparedness for school. VDSS is looking for creative, comprehensive, and innovative partnerships dedicated to excellence in achieving this goal; committed leadership; sound program designs; and evidence of sustainability.

VDSS intends that the proposed collaborative programs will ultimately contribute to a positive statewide impact on the following critical objectives toward the goal of improving the school readiness of Virginia's children:

- Improving the quality and accessibility of child care for all families
- Supporting children with special needs
- Improving child care teacher education and retention
- Improving access to health and other services
- Providing support to the families of young children
- Improving collaboration and coordination of services for young children and families
- Improving the economy of Virginia's communities

Eligible Applicants

Collaborative partnerships made up of public and private sector agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia may apply.

Please note: Any for-profit organization submitting a proposal must agree that payment for services provided will be on a re-imbursement basis only. For-profit organizations may not realize a profit from any contract resulting from this solicitation.

Collaborations must:

- 1. Establish a steering committee for the purposes of ensuring a comprehensive approach and efficient delivery; providing direction in establishing goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving desired outcomes; and developing a sound evaluation plan.**

Applicants may use existing groups to serve as the steering committee (for example, early childhood commissions or boards), but are strongly encouraged to use the sub-grant opportunity to be even more inclusive with broad representation from a variety of disciplines.

TIP: Preference will be given to applicants with diverse and comprehensive representation, as suggested by the following list:

- city or county manager
- superintendent of local school system
- director of a local department of social services (or designee)
- local health department official
- local mental health official
- representatives from local businesses, including senior executives of a large employer or of the local Chamber of Commerce
- director of a human services organization (private or nonprofit)
- director of a public preschool or child care program
- director of a private preschool or child care program
- family provider
- president of local community college
- director of local public library
- local cooperative extension agency official
- child care resource and referral agency official
- health system or military representative as appropriate to location
- parents of children receiving support services
- director of local foundation or philanthropy

- 2. Designate a fiscal agent.**
- 3. Identify a project manager to be the main contact for the sub-grant.**
- 4. Contribute a 50% cash match.**

5. Develop a strong evaluation plan to monitor progress toward achieving the outcomes of the plan.

TIP: Preference will be given to applications which:

- Give special attention to strengthening the interface between local early childhood development and public school programs.
- Are multi-jurisdictional, as appropriate to location.
- Show effective use of research-based strategies to increase the capacity and improve the quality of child care programs.
- Show an ability to sustain the effort over time.
- Are innovative.

Allocations are being made available so that communities may expand the quality of care to better meet the needs of children up to age 5.

Funding Availability and Sub-grant Period

A total of \$2 million is available from the federal Child Care and Development Fund. Five sub-grants may be awarded, each 2 years in duration, with a total maximum award not to exceed \$500,000 to each applicant. These are competitive grants, and only the highest quality proposals that include measurable outcomes and strong collaborative involvement will be awarded funding.

In order to encourage comprehensive community commitment, and to nurture self-sustaining infrastructure, a minimum 50% cash match by sub-grantees is required. No in-kind contributions and no other federal funds may be included in the 50% match. Applicants may not use local, state, or federal funds already being used for other matching purposes.

Matching funds from applicants must be/have been secured by one or more of the partnering organizations, or by the partnership itself, in the time period between **January 1, 2004 and February 15, 2006, with a minimum of half of the cash match amount secured by date of application.** The applicant must provide sufficient documentation in the application for VDSS to determine that the matching funds are eligible and consistent with the guidelines given.

In order to be eligible for the cash match, applicants must be able to document that funds secured between January 1, 2004 to December 15, 2004 were solicited and secured for the specific purposes or activities described in the sub-grant proposal.

Applicants will need to provide the following information:

- Name of matching fund source(s)

- Date of receipt (for matching funds in hand)
- Expected date of receipt (for matching funds committed)
- Type of organization providing matching funds (corporation, foundation, local government).
- Specific intended purpose of the funds.

Acceptable documentation for proof of matching fund commitments includes a sub-grant letter, check, wire transfer, or other disbursement document.

The funding period for sub-grants will be 2/15/05 to 2/15/07. The funding will be disbursed in two phases:

Planning Phase: (February 15, 2005 – May 15, 2005) A ninety day period of time is provided for sub-grantees to develop and refine the plan for proposed activities and programs. In this initial phase, the first quarter sub-grant payment (12.5% of the total sub-grant amount) will be made to sub-grantees at the beginning of the funding period. At the end of the first quarter, sub-grantees will be required to submit a report summarizing the outcomes of the planning period and noting any adjustments or revisions to their proposed project design. Upon approval by VDSS, the second phase of funding may be awarded.

Implementation Phase: Once the refined plan is approved by VDSS, the remaining sub-grant payments will be made quarterly over the balance of the two-year period. Payments of 12.5% of the total sub-grant amount will be made following the end of each quarter, upon receipt of quarterly report and invoice.

While sub-grants of up to \$500,000 are available, each applicant should determine the need and may choose to apply for less than \$500,000. If the 50% cash match at \$500,000 is a barrier to the applicant, a sub-grant for less than \$500,000 may be appropriate.

In exceptional cases, VDSS will consider requests for a reduced cash match amount (minimum 25%). An applicant making such a request should provide information regarding the following: unusually strong collaboration and/or leadership, valuable in-kind resources which contribute remarkably to successful outcomes, or highly innovative strategies.

How to Apply

Applicants requesting funding must submit one original and seven (7) copies of the sub-grant application. These must be received by the Virginia Department of Social Services, Division of Child Care and Development, Attn: Arlene Kasper, 7 North Eighth Street, 6th Floor, Richmond, Virginia 23219-3301 no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 15, 2004. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. **Emailed or faxed applications will not be considered.**

Additional Information

Copies of this sub-grant application, including the necessary sub-grant application forms and instructions, may be printed from the DSS website. This may be accessed at <http://www.dss.state.va.us/form/grants/q-dpa-05-04.html>. All of the Department's sub-grant award notices are published on this website.

If you have additional questions regarding the sub-grant application, please contact:

Arlene Kasper

Virginia Department of Social Services

Division of Child Care and Development

7 North Eighth Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219-3301

804 726-7647

Arlene.kasper@dss.virginia.gov

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

Program Overview

These sub-grants are competitive grants awarded on a one-time basis. These funds are specifically for quality child care activities. This sub-grant is limited to child care for children up to age 5. Allocations are being made so communities may have an opportunity to plan, develop, establish, expand, and/or improve existing early care and education programs within their area, with the goal of helping children enter school ready to learn. There are \$2 million allocated for the sub-grant period of February 15, 2005 – February 15, 2007.

Program Requirements

A. Proposals must describe an innovative, multi-faceted program addressing community infrastructure needs related to a more seamless delivery of early care and education for children ages 0-5, with the ultimate goal of helping children to reach kindergarten ready to learn. In addition to describing the proposed strategies, the applicant must summarize the current system of delivery and effectively identify and document existing gaps and needs.

Within the broad program requirement stated above, sub-grant funds can be used for activities such as the following:

- Training and technical assistance to child care providers in areas such as:
 - ✓ Comprehensive needs of young children, including social-emotional, health, and nutrition
 - ✓ Stages of children's growth and development
 - ✓ Literacy and numeracy skills enhancement for providers
 - ✓ Prevention and detection of child abuse and neglect
 - ✓ Care of children with special needs
 - ✓ Support to families
- Consumer education for parents and the public promoting the recognition of the importance of high quality experiences in the 0-5 years
- Provision of information increasing parental choice of child care arrangements
- Program initiatives that create and improve local collaboration around children's transition from community child care programs to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten
- Improving salaries and other compensation (such as fringe benefits) for child care staff
- Supplies, materials, and meeting expenses necessary for the activities described above
- Project manager's time

The activities listed above are intended to be illustrative, but not prescriptive. VDSS encourages applicants to work expansively and comprehensively to develop proposals which reflect initiatives of excellence in innovation, service delivery, and successful outcomes. VDSS expects sub-grantee programs to serve as models for statewide leadership and replication.

III. APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

In order to be considered for funding, all applicants must submit two original and seven (7) copies of the following documents in the following order:

1. SUB-GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET (with signatures)
2. ASSURANCES AND OTHER REQUIRED FORMS (with signatures)
3. COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS PLAN - Not to exceed 14 pages
4. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES
5. BUDGET SUMMARY AND ITEMIZED BUDGET
6. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

The applications must be signed by the fiscal agent and the project manager. All information requested must be submitted. Failure to submit all information requested may result in VDSS requiring prompt submission of missing information and/or giving a lowered evaluation of the proposal. Applications which are substantially incomplete or lack key information may be rejected by the agency. Mandatory requirements are those required by law or regulation or are such that they cannot be waived and are not subject to negotiation.

No other attachments will be considered.

1. SUB-GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

A Sub-grant Application form has been provided and shall be submitted as the cover page of the sub-grant application. Applications which lack required original signatures of the fiscal agent and project manager will not be considered.

2. REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES

Federal Assurances Form SF-424B, Form W-9, Optional Clauses, and General Sub-grant Conditions and Assurances Forms must be completed. Applications which lack required original signatures will not be considered. Two sets of the forms with original signatures should be supplied.

3. COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS PLAN (Narrative must not exceed 14 pages, must be double spaced in a 12-point font, and must have one inch margins on white paper only.)

Applicants must supply a three to five year plan covering the following components: (Please note in the Tip sections that questions have been posed to guide your thought process as you compose your responses, not necessarily to be answered specifically or exclusively.)

a) Current track record of positive impact.

TIP: What experiences or accomplishments have informed your proposed program? What qualities make your proposed program likely to succeed?

b) Financial track record and strength.

TIP: How have you shown effective fundraising and financial management? How have you excelled in your stewardship of funding?

c) Capacity, skills, and experience of leadership. Provide a description of the breadth and diversity of the steering committee as well as the comprehensive nature of the collaboration.

TIP: How have you been aggressive in your inclusiveness? What leadership skills have been important in your selection of a project manager and steering committee members? What evidence can you provide to show strong, broad-based commitment to the initiative? How will your effort be sustained?

d) Understanding of market context, including analysis of existing local early childhood services, delivery, and system as well as existing gaps. Indicate the number of clients/geographical area to be served.

TIP: What is your assessment of the adequacy of current services for families of young children? What data sources have you used? What strategies are currently being used? What barriers do parents face in accessing services or information? What factors contribute to weaknesses or gaps? Are there innovative programs or other broad-based collaborations underway?

e) Program design and implementation plan, including clear description of services and activities (see Overview of Activities/Outcomes form), delivery strategy, community collaboration to increase resources, and marketing or outreach efforts. Summarize the measurable goal(s), objective(s), and key activities, and timeline proposed.

TIP: What distinguishes the proposed activities from what currently exists? How will the proposed activities promote quality? How will creative partnerships be utilized to build and sustain a cohesive effort?

f) Projections for financial performance and raising needed resources, including amount of firm commitments and likely success for raising balance of matching funds in a timely manner.

TIP: What creative strategies have you used to secure financial commitment? What kinds of leadership or partnerships have you utilized? What evidence of likely success can you give?

g) Projections for impact. Describe specifically the outcome(s) you hope to achieve by implementing the proposed project. (See Overview of Activities/Outcomes form).

TIP: Why have you chosen these specific activities to address the objectives? How will the objectives serve to meet the goals? How will your activities and your outreach strengthen business and community investment in school readiness? What indicators will you spotlight and track? What long-term results do you hope to achieve?

4. ACTIVITIES and OUTCOMES

Using the instruction sheet provided, please complete the chart describing the activities and outcomes of the proposed initiative. Additional copies of the sheet may be made if needed.

5. PROPOSED BUDGET

Complete the Itemized Budget Sheet. Attach to the Itemized Budget Sheet a budget narrative that includes a) description of each proposed expenditure and b) justification for the proposed expenditure by explaining the need for it.

All expenses included in the application must be allowable under federal and state regulations, must be reasonable and necessary, and must apply directly to the project. Sub-grant funding must not be used to supplant other funding.

Funds **may not** be used to:

- Make subsidy payments to child care providers;
- Pay for construction, capital improvements, land, or vehicles;
- Provide sectarian purpose or activity, including worship or instruction; or
- Satisfy any requirement for the expenditure of non-federal funds or a condition for the receipt of federal funds.

6. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Current letters of support or collaborative agreements from a minimum of 3 agencies or organizations directly involved in the proposed program or activity must be included. It is strongly suggested that the letters include representation from the local public school system, a corporate leader or Chamber of Commerce director, as well as a local government official.

IV. PROCESS OF REVIEW AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD

Sub-grant applications will be reviewed by a panel of individuals who have demonstrated expertise in child care and development and will make programmatic and budgetary recommendations for sub-grant awards. Site visits or interviews will be conducted with all finalists.

A. Specific Criteria To Be Used by Sub-grant Reviewers:

1. Evidence of Leadership, Capacity, and Support: 40 points
 - a. Evidence of effective collaboration between participating agencies and organizations, especially the crucial interface between early childhood programs and public schools. (10 points)
 - b. Evidence of strong leadership from high-level representatives for the initiative (showing diversity and breadth of steering committee), as well as a supporting grass-roots network. (20 points)
 - c. Evidence of commitment to continuation of programs/activities when sub-grant funding ends. (10 points)
2. Quality and Comprehensiveness of Project Design: 45 points
 - a. Clear, succinct description of current delivery and gaps, supported with data. (10 points)
 - b. Quality (with attention to research-based best practices) and innovation of proposed strategies; comprehensiveness of business plan. (35 points)
3. Plan for Evaluation: 15 points
 - a. Effective measurement of project outputs (quantity) and outcomes (quality) of services. (5 points)
 - b. Utilization of research-based instruments, when practicable. (10 points)

B. Award to Sub-grantees:

The Request for Applications process is a competitive process and awards are given based on a review of criteria defined within the RFA and negotiations of final terms. DSS reserves the right to award up to five awards, each for a period of two years, and for a total amount each of up to \$500,000. The Department may, with a written explanation, withdraw the RFA or reject applications at any time prior to the award.

Applicants will be notified of sub-grant decisions by VDSS by February 5, 2005. Those approved will be required to sign a Letter of Agreement that defines the terms of the sub-grant.

V. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

After the initial planning phase of ninety days, sub-grantees must submit a report noting the results of the planning period and any adjustments or revisions to the proposed implementation plan.

Once the plan is approved by VDSS and the implementation phase begins, quarterly reports detailing progress, along with an invoice for allowable expenditures shall be submitted to the department within 30 days after the end of each quarter. Barriers to

meeting objectives outlined in this work plan shall be reported, and solutions to such barriers shall be explored and shall be included in the quarterly reports. Quarterly payment of sub-grant funding will depend upon timely receipt of the quarterly report and invoice.